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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL
STUDY GROUP
ON ALIENATION

[No. 3]

A laboratory exploration of the worker - client relationship in the welfare system - British Columbia

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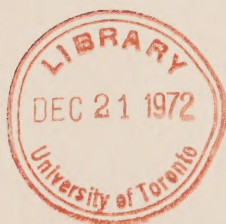
OPERATION EXAMEN ;

A Laboratory Exploration of the
Worker-Client Relationship in the
Welfare System - British Columbia

Presented to

The Department of Social Welfare
Province of British Columbia

and

The Federal Provincial Study Group on Alienation

BACKGROUND

This study was carried out as one of many studies which have been commissioned by the Task Force on Alienation of the National Department of Health and Welfare. A composite report summarizing the general trends in all the studies will be presented in September, 1970 to the Task Force.

In particular, our group was asked to conduct the study reported here in British Columbia, along with a similar type of study in Manitoba. The major distinction between the two investigations was that the study in British Columbia occurred over a four-day period with the participants living in, while the study in Manitoba was spread over an eight-week period with participation for one half day each week. If the reader is interested in comparing these two approaches, we suggest looking at the report which we have presented to the Manitoba Department of Health and Social Services and the Task Force on Alienation of the National Department of Health and Welfare, which summarizes the results in that province.

We are particularly indebted to Mr. T. D. Bingham, Director of Programmes, Department of Rehabilitation and Social Improvement, Mr. Thos. Butters for his constant assistance in the day-to-day operations, and social workers and participants who played such a critical role in making the study a success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

The participants in our study included 12 welfare recipients,
11 social workers and 5 senior officials, all from within a
20 mile area of Metropolitan Vancouver. The sessions con-
sisted of meetings and laboratory exercises scheduled between
9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., from June 9 to 12, 1970, with all
participants living in.

Emphasis was on having the participants experience different
ways of relating in terms of immediate impact and long-range
effects. The following exercises and activities were included:

"Who am I?" Activity	Autobiographical Technique
Non-verbal Leading and	Life Inventory
Following	Peak Experiences
Coalition Game in Trios	Things I Do Well, Poorly
T-groups	Values to be Realized
Communication Game	Intergroup Fishbowl
Tape Feedback Exercise	Strength Bombardment
Developing Life Plans	Competition Task

Follow-up interviews were completed three to five weeks after
the sessions to obtain reactions on their effect on the parti-
cipants personally and for further insight into how the welfare
system alienates recipients.

The general reaction of participants was favourable. They
found some techniques, such as Strength Bombardment, Auto-
biographical Technique, Competition Task, Communication
Game and Feedback process, most helpful to them personally.
There was also a feeling of reduction in the status barriers
which existed between recipients and social workers. Partici-
pants commented specifically on the fact that the sessions
gave them a better understanding of alienation in the welfare
system.

As a result of the sessions, some long-term effects emerged:

- Improvement of Family Interpersonal Relationships

- Openness of Communication

- Positive Outlook

- Impact on Professional Behaviour of Social Workers

The major drawbacks emphasized by all participants were that more levels of the organization (administrators, stenographers, etc.) should be involved in the group sessions; more follow-up sessions and preparatory information should be given; and that there should be an equal distribution of sexes at the sessions. Some felt the recipient group should have been picked randomly to prevent "favourites" of the Department from being selected.

The impressions of one social worker represent a vivid picture of the encounter sessions and have been included in unedited form in this report.

Important themes emerged concerning the complex problems of the welfare system. Social workers and recipients agreed that the roots of the problems lie in community attitudes towards people on welfare. Another major contributing factor is the administrative system. While community attitudes may change over a long period of time, the immediate opportunities for revising the system appear to lie within the scope of better administrative practice.

The social worker finds himself at a pressure spot in the system because he must not only satisfy the administrative requirements, but he also feels a need to help recipients. This contradiction of responsibilities arises because of the social worker's performance of two functions -- that of money giver, and counsellor. The majority of participants were in favour of dividing these functions.

For the recipient, the community with its prejudices and pressures is his greatest source of alienation. The present welfare system is not perceived as doing much to rehabilitate people who legitimately need assistance to get back into the mainstream of society. One of the major alienating factors

appears to be the motivational and attitudinal effects of getting "ground-down" by the welfare system. On the other hand, some recipients are trapped on welfare because of their special personal situations. Deserted wives and the poorly educated are two common examples.

In the view of the participants, it would be useful to provide more human relations skills to staff and to embark on a program of community education about the services of the Welfare Department and the people receiving the services.

The participants had some suggestions about how to improve the organization and procedures. The most common recommendation was that open communication from top to bottom be initiated. Perhaps the most important feature of the seminar was that it demonstrated how concrete steps could be taken to open up this two-way flow of communication.

Recommendations

1.   Separate the "money giving" and "counselling" functions

2.   "All or nothing" welfare system should be changed

3.   More sensitivity training in social work education

4.   Recipient advisory or consultant groups

5.   Recipients could perform valuable services in the welfare offices.

6.   Group counselling

7.   Provide more printed information concerning the rights and privileges of the recipients

8.   Improve appeal procedures

9.   Set up specific regulations about enquiries into personal lives of recipients.

10. Recipients should choose their counsellors wherever possible

11. Improve the first contact with the welfare system

12. Create a less officious atmosphere in the welfare office

13. Improve the communication within the Department

14. Greater community education to provide a better understanding of the welfare recipient and the welfare system.

Areas for Future Study

1. We would suggest a project to separate the provision of financial assistance to recipients from the counselling.

2. In a community of from 10 to 20 thousand, it would be helpful to have an action research program mounted which would coordinate health, education and welfare services within a single community.

3. An organizational development facilitator, working one-third time over a period of two years with all members of a regional social welfare office (which would include not only the administrators, workers and clerical staff but also the recipient group) could improve the efficiency and reduce alienation caused by the operation of that office.

4. It would appear that some specific laboratory techniques, such as Strength Bombardment, and Career Planning Exercise, could become a routine practise in dealing with clients and in developing staff in welfare offices.

5.   The Federal Government could enhance the
       delivery of welfare services by providing
       staff training and by developing tools for
       their trainers' use in sessions such as the
       one demonstrated in this action research.
       The increase in worker sensitivity and
       improvement in communication would reduce
       alienation caused by the welfare system.

       This hypothesis, which has been supported by
       our study, should be subjected to a broader
       and more rigorous test.

OBJECTIVES

CHAPTER I

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were:

1. To demonstrate a process by which welfare recipients and administrators can work together to solve problems arising from the dispensation of welfare.

2. To investigate the problems facing welfare officers and recipients in the dispensation of public welfare and their possible solutions.

3. To explore methods by which the relationship between the welfare recipient and the welfare worker can be utilized to mobilize the resources of the recipient so that he can better cope with his life situation.

METHOD

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Selection of Subjects

The design called for 12 welfare recipients and
12 welfare workers to be selected at random from
offices in the province. These arrangements were
carried out by the Department of Social Welfare in
British Columbia. Directors of various regional
offices were asked to submit names of welfare workers,
and each worker was asked to pick a recipient to
attend. Once the recipient had been contacted by
the worker to ask if he was willing to have his name
submitted, a letter was sent explaining the purpose
of the study and asking for his cooperation. This
was confirmed by a telephone call. All recipients
contacted were willing to attend. Recipients were
paid $40.00 for attending the session and all costs
of food and accommodation were paid for the welfare
workers and the recipients.

It should be pointed out that this was not a random
process of choosing either workers or recipients and,
as will be shown in later results, there was some
criticism that perhaps the selection of people had
favoured those who had positive attitudes towards the
Department and the present system of administering
welfare programs.

The Department was also asked to select 12 senior
welfare officials, including if possible either the
Minister or the Deputy Minister. At the time of the
study, which was June 9 - 12, there was an unusual
amount of work connected with labour disputes in the
Province which put a burden on the welfare department.
It was impossible to have many senior officials attend
the first and last sessions. All recipients and all
workers who were approached agreed to attend. The
result was that 12 welfare recipients, 11 workers and
five senior officials took part in the study. The

senior officials were made up of consultants from the Department and directors of regional offices in the Vancouver area. All participants in this project came from within 20 miles of Metropolitan Vancouver.

Procedure

A detailed description of the program over the four-day period is given in the next section. It should be noted that the recipients, workers and administrators gathered in a motel on the outskirts of Vancouver for a four-day period.

The sessions were meetings and laboratory exercises. As they were scheduled between 9:00 A.M. and 10:00 P.M., with breaks for lunch and supper all participants lived in.

The program for the administrators followed a confrontation format. This is described in greater detail by R. Beckhard.[1] It is a meeting where senior officials appear initially for a half-day session to define their problems, then reconvene for a half-day session at the end to discuss the solutions to which the group has come.

One of the most important aspects of the work was the method participants devised for reporting back to senior officials the result of their experiences over the four-day period.

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[1] Beckhard, R. "The Confrontation Meeting". Harvard Business Review, March-April, 1967, 45, No. 2.

8

Dr. John C. Croft and Dr. David Jackson were in charge
of the sessions and were present during the four days
of live-in laboratories. Follow-up interviews were
conducted by a research assistant, three to five weeks
after the sessions were completed. The objectives of
these interviewers were to obtain reactions of parti-
cipants as to the effect these laboratory sessions had
on them personally as either workers or recipients,
and to gain further insights into how they felt the
welfare system alienated recipients. The only other
data gathering which occurred during the study was the
completion of some evaluation forms at various points
in the experimental process, and the notes taken by
the group leaders, Dr. Croft and Dr. Jackson. These
notes contained important insights and information
forthcoming from the group exercises.

LABORATORY TIMETABLE

Alienation Conference
Vancouver, B.C. - July 9-12, 1970

Tuesday:

    9:00 - 9:10   Housekeeping and Introduction
                         of Government officials.

    9:10 - 9:30   Message from Government official
                         giving the background for the
                         Conference on Alienation and
                         describing how the Department
                         supported the research activities
                         and saw them as extremely innovative.

    9:30 - 10:00   Introduction by David Jackson
                         outlining the basic principles
                         for the forthcoming four days'
                         activities, including such things
                         as openness, confrontation with
                         caring, trust and the relaxation of
                         previous roles. Also, discussion
                         of how this conference was con-
                         ceived and why it took a form which
                         was unusual for most research projects-
                         that is, action research.

                         Nine issues --

                         1) Act critique, content and process,
                            then act again.
                         2) Decision-making by people with
                            the most information -- in other
                            words, the people at the position
                            in the organization where most
                            of the information is available
                            should make the decision.
                         3) Confrontation with caring;be
                            open and direct.
                         4) Experience it in the 'here and
                            now', not outside these four walls.
                         5) People are equal when working
                            on a problem and therefore reduce
                            any preconceived status differences.

Tuesday
(Cont'd.)
        6) Experience it; don't describe it.
        7) Use each other as people, not
           roles.
        8) Reduce inappropriate competition.
        9) Strive for open communication and
           trust.

10:00 - 11:00 Participants met in three homo-
           genous groups--administrators,
           social workers and recipients--to
           isolate on flip charts major issues
           causing alienation in the welfare
           system.

11:30 - 12:00 Administrators in the centre of
           fish bowl describing their
           reactions to the issues that had
           been isolated and also talking about
           what they thought could be done to
           ameliorate these conditions.

 2:00 - 2:30 Lecturette
        - themes for the week
        - ways to be towards each
          other to facilitate growth:

        • regard (not indifference)
        • empathy (active listening)
        • congruence (similarity
            between feelings and
            behaviour)
        • genuineness (meaning what
            you say)
        • openness (direct report of
            feelings)
        • confrontation (not letting
            other people kid themselves)
        • respecting the other's separa-
            teness

Tuesday
(Cont'd.)

2:30 - 4:00 Exercises

1) Who am I? (On a sheet of paper, 10 answers; mill around and share).

2) Non-verbal leading and following (with partner).

3) Coalition Game (in trios).
   (a)   Two choices of interaction style:
         (i) Two persons agree-the third disagrees.
         (ii) Two persons always disagree - the third agrees. Suggested topics for discussion:
              - the weather
              - the War in Vietnam
              - other

4) Lethal Game (in trios.)
   (a)   Interaction style: Three persons always agree with one another. Suggested topics for discussion:
         - free university tuition
         - effect of three-day work week
         - other

5) Select T-groups (heterogeneous) and Clinic about above experiences.

6) Communication Game (with partner).
   (a)   People back to back. Talk about anything. (2 minutes).
   (b)   Look into each other's eyes. No talking (think about the other person's thoughts). (2 minutes).
   (c)   Look into each other's eyes. Touch each other--no talking (think the other person's thoughs). (2 minutes).
   (d)   Touch (hold hands). Eyes closed--no talking. (2 minutes).
   (e)   Look into each other's eyes. Talk--no touching. (2 minutes).
   (f)   Touch, look into each other's eyes. Try to argue (say, about the person's hair style). (2 minutes).

7) Clinic in T-groups.

4:00 - 5:00 T-groups met in separate rooms. The two groups had been formed, each having half recipients and half social workers.

12

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7:00  -   7:30  Lecturette - on Feedback, Feed-to, Feed-around
                practice giving feedback on sheets of paper,
                checking for accuracy with total group.

                Purpose of T-groups is to give feedback.

7:30  -   9:00  T-groups in separate rooms.

9:00  -  10:00  Clusters, group-to-group feedback, where the two
                groups were together and there was a fishbowl
                with one group in the center and the other on
                the outside; and then the reverse.
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Wednesday
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9:00  -  12:00  Tape exercise, where group members were given a
                series of exercises in giving feedback correctly.

11:00  -  12:00  T-groups.

2:00  -   5:00  F R E E    T I M E

7:00  -   9:00  In separate groups, strength bombardment.

9:00  -  10:00  Clusters, Group-to-group feedback.
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Thursday
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9:00  -  12:00  Developing Life Plans (in Quartets).

9:00  -   9:15  Introduction

            "   Today we will look at where we are, who we
                are, and what we like, and try to spread these
                out in front of ourselves.  Then with this
                information available, we can look to the
                future and try to fit it in as best we can to
                out own plans, objectives, and growth. Everyone
                will need a pencil and about 15 pieces of paper."

            "   The results of this experience will mainly be
                for your own use.                            "
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13

Thursday
(Cont'd.)

9:15 - 9:45 Line Drawing Activity

 "   Your first task is to--draw a horizontal line
     from left to right, representing your life--
     put a check on it where you currently are not
     --spend a few moments discussing with your
     group why you drew the line as long as you did,
     and why you put the check where you did--ask
     any questions about it you want. Focus on age or
     growth, whatever you choose.

9:45 - 10:15 Who Am I Activity

 "   It is a part of our culture to explain
     things chronologically. Probably the most
     important thing about behaviour as it is
     occurring here and now is that it has con-
     sequences for her and now, plus past explana-
     tions, and future eventualities. So, today,
     we will work on the right hand side of the
     check mark you have made on your life line, and
     look at that part of your life that hasn't
     happened yet. We will investigate the right
     hand side of your line as much as we can, rather
     than slip back to the left side. Write--on
     ten separate pieces of paper--ten separate
     answers to the question, "Who am I?"   "

 "   " You have your own way of thinking about
     yourself. You may think of yourself in terms
     of your role, or in terms of qualities that
     you have. You may think of yourself in terms
     of your negative attributes. Or you may
     think of yourself as a mixture of all of these
     different frameworks. Whatever framework
     your life has had, try to find different
     answers to the question, "Who am I?" and write
     them down. When you are done, I want you to
     review the ten answers and think about what
     you would be if you eliminated any one of them. "

14

"   When you have finished writing, rank order
    them. At the top of the rank order, put
    those self-descriptions that are most
    essentially you, and at the bottom of the
    rank order put those self-descriptions that
    you could most do without and still not
    lose your most essential qualities.   "

"   After you have finished your rank order
    share these with one another, and discuss
    them freely.   "

10:15 - 10:30 Autobiographical Activity

"   Next, move all the way over, almost to the
    right end of your life line, and write a
    brief autobiography that might appear at
    that point in time in Who's Who.   "

"   Don't write this autobiography as an
    obiturary. Write what you would like to
    have written about you and what you might
    be able to accomplish. It should be a
    statement you like to read, and contain
    accomplishments that are possible. It
    should be realistic, but still things about
    yourself you believe are really conceiveable.
    Now share your autobiographical sketch with
    the rest of your team, and discuss it. Then
    go back to your list of ten "Who Am I?"
    statements and add any additional statements
    that would further explore what you would
    like to be.   "

10:30 - 11:30 Life Inventory

"   This next step is quite hard work.
    Something called a life inventory. To look
    at all the things that you do and would
    like to do. It will help you to display all
    of yourself in terms of your activities
    and values. It ends up as a map of your
    life in terms of a number of elements which
    may or may not be overlapping. I am going
    to write down these elements for you.   "

15

1. Peak Experiences --

   This definition is broad enough so that
   they are not necessarily the most
   exquisite moments you have had. These
   are or have been your "kicks" -- the
   moments in your life that are remembered
   as having been really great; the times
   when you have felt you were really living
   and enjoying living. These are the
   moments that have made you feel living is
   worthwhile. It is a list of the events
   that have mattered to you in terms of
   making you feel you are glad you are a
   human being and glad you are alive.

2. Things I Do Well

   Some of these probably are things that
   are very meaningful to you. There
   may be duplication with your first list.
   Some of the things you do well may be
   things that bore you to death. This is
   a hard list to compile because it com-
   petes with our cultural norm of being
   modest. Try to overcome this inhibition.

3. Things I do Poorly --

   This list should contain things you want
   to do or you have to do, but not
   necessarily things in which you have
   an interest. It should be a list of
   things you do poorly, that for some
   reason or other you need to do, don't
   include for example playing the violin.

4. Things I Would Like to Stop Doing --

   This might or might not be things
   that you have to do but would like to
   stop doing. Someone else in your
   team might be able to suggest some
   things that it would be good for you
   to stop doing--now, or in the future.
   Some of the things on this list may
   be things you would like to do but
   that you know you do poorly. Others
   might be things that you hate to do,
   but for some reason feel you have to
   do.

16

5. Things I Would Like to Do Well --

   This might be a list of desired skills
   that you would like to include in
   your personal and potential life. It
   might be related to an avocational
   activity or a new skill in your
   present job.

6. Peak Experiences I Would Like to Have --

   These are the kinds of things you
   imagine you would like to have happen
   to you but which have not.

7. Values to Be Realized --

   This element is less clear than the
   others. Value means many things to
   many people. It might be being
   rich, having deep friendship, or being
   with young people. They can be
   tangible, but most probably are not.

8. Things I'd Like to Start Doing Now --

   The objective here is to explore some
   of the things you may have been putting
   off, but which you really want to
   start doing. It might be growing a
   beard, becoming more aggressive, asking
   for more responsibility on your job,
   or a number of other similar items.

" Let me also suggest a procedure. It's
   best for the person whose inventory is
   being taken to be free just to think
   and respond, and not have to write
   in detail. If other team members
   will serve as consultants, interviewers
   and recorders, the person being inven-
   toried will not have to bother
   writing down things and can be free
   to respond. Don't beat it to death.
   Get down those things that are
   revealed spontaneously, and move on
   to the next person. Move at a lively
   pace, then go back and add those
   things that peopple want to add to
   their lists. It's best to spend 10

17

minutes or so with each individual, but
you can also take each element in
order among all the members of the
group.   "

11:30 - 12:00 Project Planning

"   The next phase begins the formulation
of projects that combine a number of
the desires expressed in the life
inventory. This is difficult, and
there are few procedures or patterns.
Instead of thinking of goals with a
separate set of strategies, think of
projects that provide opportunities
to allow you to learn what you want
or that move you towards the peak ex-
periences you want to have. In each
project, try to realize as many of
these values, goals and desires as
you can. Try to develop an overall
picture that lets you feel alive and
satisfied. I can make these three
suggestions:

a)   Think of vocational or avoca-
tional projects to which you are
already committed. Consider the
parts of these projects that
provide you opportunities to learn
what you want to learn, that
move you toward the peak experi-
ence you want, or that allow you
to reach the values, goals and
desires you want. Think about
these projects in terms of what
you can add or subtract from them
so they will provide you with
increased fulfillment.

b)   Then list projects that you have
in mind to which you have not yet
made a commitment. Consider these
in terms of those which are likely
to be most fulfilling to you.
Make some plans for these.

c)   Another thing you might do is
brainstorm possible projects
with your group. Make a list
without evaluating each item. Ro-
tate around the team, first one
person and then another. After
the list is made, each person can
evaluate each project for himself. "

18

Thursday
(Cont'd)

12:00 - 12:30 Clinic on the Morning's Experiences and
Exercises

- Which aspects of the morning seem
to be most difficult?

- Which aspects of the morning seemed
most meaningful?

- What surprised you the most?

- What are some of the obstacles you
might encounter in accomplishing
your projects?

2:00 - 5:00 Intergroup Competition

2:00 - 4:30 Instructions

During the next period you will meet in
a T-group room to develop a report on the
attached problem. Later you will decide
which group has prepared the best report.

This report should be narrative form
and not exceed five hundred words.

Before begining work on your report, each
group must select a judge, a contact man,
and a group spokesman. As soon as the
three are selected all three will report
to the director for further instruction.
The judge will not return to the group
until this exercise is completed.

The contact man represents his group in
all relations between groups and with
the staff.

The spokesman will present his group's
report in general assembly if presentation
is necessary for establishing the best
report.

Task

In your T-group, your task is: a) to
select the ten most important problems
from the list of forty; and b) to rank
order those ten from "1" - the most im-
portant, to "10" - the least important.
Your T-group should be in complete agree-
ment about the selection of ten and about
their rank order.

Group Problem

Prepare a written statement of 500 words
or less which describes the difficulties
your group had in reaching complete agree-
ment on the ranking, and which outlines
the barriers which may be inhibiting the
process in your group. This statement
will be read by your spokesman in his pre-
sentation to the general assembly.

4:30   Presentation by Spokesman and Verdict of Judges.

4:45   Lecturette -- Things that happen in com-
petitive, win-lose situations.

7:00 - 10:00   Intergroup Collaboration

7:00 - 7:30 The Problem: How to present to the guests
tomorrow.

T-groups meet in separate rooms to:

1) Discuss: (a) What we learned;
            (b) How to communicate with guests;

2) Prepare a plan to present to other groups
at 9:00 this evening.

9:00 - 10:00 Groups meet together to collaborate:

1) Present list of each group
2) Discuss plans
3) Openly discuss anticipated problems in
communicating with guests tomorrow
4) Plan tomorrow's meeting together

20

Friday:

    7:30 - 8:30 Breakfast together.

  10:00 - 10:15 The administrators rejoined the recipients
               and social workers at this points and
               stayed until the end of the session.

               Introduction by Dave Jackson, explaining
               the schedule for the morning and outlining
               the basic principle that the group wished
               the administrators to participate in experi-
               encing some of the activities they had
               gone through.

  10:15 - 10:30 Presentation of lists of learning completed
               by the two T-groups. A spokesman was
               selected from each of the T-groups, (in
               this case, both were recipients).

  10:30 - 11:30 Repeat of Tuesday Exercises - J. C. Croft:

               1) Non-verbal leading and following
               2) Coalition game
               3) Lethal game
               4) Selection of discussion groups: clinic
               5) Communication game
               6) Clinic

  11:30 - 1:00 Strength Bombardment in discussion groups.
               The administrators were included and
               three groups were set up.

    1:00 - 2:00 Clusters, group to group feedback, with
               lunch.

    2:00 - 2:30 Administrators in the center for fishbowl.
               Here they were given the opportunity to
               react to what had happened in the morning
               and to answer questions.

    2:30 - 3:00 Summary by David Jackson and John Croft in
               the center. After this was completed a
               post-conference questionnaire was passed out
               along with a copy of all the issues that
               had been identified earlier, which were
               ranked by each member of the group.

PARTICIPANTS' REACTIONS

CHAPTER III

PARTICIPANTS' REACTIONS

One of the most important aspects of the present research
design is that it is cast in an "action research" mode.
By this we mean that something intervenes in the system
and the intervention is studied simultaneously. The
design of such research departs from the traditional ap-
proach in that, it is impossible to develop control groups
because of the preliminary and tentative nature of the
work and because the actual intervention is engineered
on a moment-to-moment basis. The following day's program
is developed on the basis of the needs and outcomes of
the present day. For example, in the Vancouver sessions,
group-to-group feedback was developed from feed-to-feed
around situations which arose in earlier exercises.

Because the methods in the study were primarily to bring
about new ways of looking at the worker-recipient relation-
ship, systematic data collection was minimized. The
emphasis was on having people experience different ways of
relating in terms of immediate impact and long range effects,
rather than on examining in minute detail each step in
the process. Undoubtedly such a close examination will be
warranted if these general approaches seem valid and
valuable.

In the following section we will explore the reactions
people had at the close of the session and during the
follow-up interviews three to five weeks later, in an at-
tempt to review and analyze the methodology. The reader
should look for areas where this intervention action has
had impact with the object of exploring new methods of
approaching the general problem of alienation in the
welfare system. Later sections of this report will cover
changes that occurred and reactions of participants in
specific areas, as well as our recommendations and our
hypotheses for future study arising from our work in
British Columbia.

In answer to the question, "What did you think of the seminar?", the reaction was unanimously favourable. A typical example was:

"Fantastic course -- really never believed that such an approach would work -- much better way than previous staff development courses -- all other participants thought it very successful."

Generally, favourable reactions fell into four categories. There were those who made a blanket statement about the positive nature of the experience.

"Moving experience."

"One of the highlights of my life. I was really happy to have that experience."

"I feel very privileged and fortunate to have attended."

Another group of participants discussed the openness and freedom of the course as the outstanding characteristic.

"Very stimulating, so many things discussed that I am still trying to sort things out."

"Gave everyone a chance to see his own self - also, we were able to speak freely."

Some, though positive in their comments, had reservations about procedures used during the seminar which were strange to them.

"I thought some things were weird but it led to understanding on all levels."

"Initially I felt threatened. As it progressed I became totally involved. It was an event to be cherished."

Some participants commented on the applications of this process to other aspects of their work-life:

"This was a useful method for breaking down barriers."

> *"If we could recreate this in a working*
> *situation it would help mobilize the*
> *recipients I am sure."*

> *"Extremely valuable to get workers and*
> *recipients together."*

> *"It displayed to all of us the talents*
> *that recipients possess."*

Another indication of the support given by the recipients
was that all those who were asked the question, "Would
you attend any other sessions of this type?", answered
in the affirmative.

Specific Helpful Techniques

Participants were asked what elements in the program
were most useful to them personally.

Strength Bombardment

Strength Bombardment was the one technique most frequently
mentioned as useful. This was an exercise where members
of the group were asked in serial rotation to spend
three minutes telling the group what was good about
themselves. After they had talked about their positive
points for three minutes, the group was given five minutes
to describe and discuss the good points that were men-
tioned by the participant, or other good points that he
or she had not commented upon. Generally people found it
difficult at first to say nice things about themselves
and were much more familiar with describing their bad
points. It seems important in the study of alienation
to recognize that features which build up the person and
reward positive aspects of his behaviour are valued to
such an extent. Undoubtedly this is a characteristic of
the experience which could be translated into normal
practice in welfare offices. Comments made by participants
were of the following types:

> *"I was amazed to discover what others*
> *thought of me."*

> *"In the Strength Bombardment, my strengths*
> *were recognized and as a result I seemed*
> *to be strengthened even further."*

> *"It gave me confidence in myself."*

24

Autobiographical Technique

The second most favoured exercise was the autobiographical technique where four participants sit at a table and in a systematic way describe "Who am I?" and "What are my life plans?". In this exercise each person in turn answers a series of questions, being interviewed by another participant, while the other two members of the group record the answers. The structure of the actual questions are given in the timetable, under the exercise "Who Am I?" on Tuesday, and the "Development of a Life Plan" on Thursday. Some people appreciated this exercise because it caused them to face issues squarely in a way that is not done in normal day-to-day worrying about personal problems:

> *"Looking at these facts makes you realize what you really want in the future."*

> *"It gave me more of an insight into my personal goals and what I wanted to do with my life."*

Along with this, there seemed to be a general appreciation of a series of exercises which would help to ascertain one's goals:

> *"It helped me to sort myself out."*

> *"It made me look at myself with honesty."*

Competition Task

The third most helpful element in the program was the competition task. This was designed to demonstrate alienation to the participants. It's important to note that it came on the second to last day when a strong feeling of openness and positive, frank evaluation had been created. The reason for this task, which is described in detail in the outline, was to show how quickly these good feelings could be broken down and replaced by hostility, distrust and anger. The impact of the contrast was apparently not lost on some of the participants.

> *"It was a most valuable and fascinating experience."*

> *"I learned how to control hostility."*

25

"I developed respect for other people,
which allowed me to resolve hostilities
that were generated."

"It provided me with insights into how
groups function."

Communication Games

Another highly rated exercise was the Communication
Games. Here participants were asked to communicate with
each other using various modalities -- looking in each
other's eyes for a few minutes, talking to each other
standing back-to-back, or standing looking eye-to-eye and
holding hands while trying to argue (which most found
impossible to do because of the well knit channels of
communication). There seemed to be three major aspects
of these exercises which impressed the participants:

1) "Communicating directly with other persons."

2) "Lowering of all barriers, particularly those
   of status."

3) "Learning to listen to other people's points
   of view."

At one time or another during their post-seminar ques-
tionnaire or during the interview that followed several
weeks later, all recipients seemed to refer to the value
of feedback. One of the cardinal aspects of the seminar
was that people learned to react both positively and
negatively to others. The importance of a feedback process
is to say directly what you feel in reaction to what the
other person is doing. The feedback in normal; day-to-day
intercourse is often veiled or screened, so that only
positive things or very selected things are fed back to
the person who is acting. Often no feedback occurs at
all and therefore, the actor does not know how he is im-
pressing others. Because the laboratory situations were
set up to explicitly promote and develop the ability of
people to feed back information to each other, this
feature became an asset in the experience and was one
that all participants seemed to appreciate.

Major Outcomes of the Seminar

In general there seemed to be four major outcomes of the
seminar for the participants. Many found they had

developed.

1) "More confidence in myself and my work."

2) "More self-awareness" -- "I thought more about
   my own motivation."

3) "A better understanding of how I relate to other
   people and how they relate to me."

4) "A greater awareness of the good that is in all
   people."

In addition to these general reactions, recipients
emphasized the one unique aspect of the experience, which
undoubtedly did much to counteract the alienation. As
one recipient put it:

   "I felt equal with the others."

Or, in the words of another recipient:

   *"It helped me to understand some people
   who I normally wouldn't understand."*

In general there was a feeling of reduction in the
barriers, primarily status barriers, which existed
between recipients and social workers. The recipients
were pleasantly surprised by their ability to contri-
bute on an equal basis with their social workers. The
social workers were pleased to find that recipients
possessed valuable personal skills which, in some cases,
were lacking in themselves. In particular some of the
recipient group showed unique strength in reaching out
to others in the seminar, providing comfort, insight
and support.

Long Term Effects

It is traditional for people when interviewed
immediately after a training course to comment in
rather glowing terms about the value of the exper-
ience for them. Perhaps more important was the
actual change in behaviour that occurred after the
training session. We asked the participants when
we interviewed them several weeks later to comment
on specifc incidents occurring since the seminar
where some experience or something learned was
of help to them. The incidents listed below seem

27

to fall into four categories and were mentioned with the same degree of frequency by the recipients who were interviewed.

Family Interpersonal Relationships

People writing about sensitivity training and inter-personal confrontation have commented on the impact these sessions have on the relations of the partici-pants with their families. This was no exception in our study. Many participants commented that they thought the greatest change had come in their relationship with their spouse and their children. For example, one related the following story:

> *"Before the seminar my family had family meetings to try to iron out differences; generally these were very negative - you might even call them gripe sessions. I felt that no good came out of our discussions even though we were trying hard to communicate. After the seminar I saw the meetings that we had were much more positive. Perhaps it was because I felt strong enough to be able to help the rest of my family. For example, I made everyone say what they liked about each other; just as in the seminar they found it hard to do that at first but the feeling is good now in our family. Meetings have become a positive help to us in communicating, and the value of these meetings that we have seemed to carry on into everyday life of myself and my children."*

Another commented that:

> *"I guess my husband noticed the biggest change in me. He was pleased to see that I had opened up -- that is, I was able to talk more with him about things that were bothering me."*

A male participant stated:

> *"I have now greater communication with my wife and as a result there seems to be more interest in each other than there was before the seminar."*

28

One recipient reported:

> *"My home life is much improved, and the interesting thing is that my worker, who was also at the seminar, told me exactly the same thing about her reaction to being a participant in the seminar."*

Openness of Communication

Along with this reaction in the family there seemed to be a general ability on the part of some participants to communicate more openly with people, not only in the family but in their everyday life:

> *"I'm more open to people now."*

> *"I found it easier to talk to the school superintendent after the seminar than before."*

> *"I feel myself relating to people on the street in a more personal way. I say 'hello' to people now when I meet them."*

Positive Outlook

Along with the openness in communication there seemed to be a strong positive reaction on people's part. When the administrators returned on the final day one commented that he thought he had come to a party three hours late, since there was such congeniality and friendliness between the participants who had been there for four days. The question is, can such a "psychological high" be perpetutated, or is it merely a momentary spin-off from an encounter experience? The general reaction of many participants suggests this positive attitude towards themselves and towards other people seems to have carried on for several weeks after the seminar at least.

> *"I can now look at the good in things and people - not just see the bad as I used to."*

> *"I guess the answer to that question in general is, I have a new outlook on life."*

> *"People said I glowed; I carried myself proudly; I was radiating outward."*

29

One woman told an interesting story which probably
best describes change in attitude towards self and
others which it was possible for some to achieve
through this process:

> "I was at the grocery store standing watching
> the people at the counter. I just felt so
> good I guess I was smiling at them without
> realizing it. Finally some people asked me
> if I was laughing at them; I was shocked and
> surprised and said 'no', and I started to
> talk to them. I told them about our sessions
> and how it had changed my attitude towards
> people, and I explained to them that I was
> feeling good when I was watching them. I
> guess it ended up with there being pleasant
> feelings on both sides."

Impact on Professional Behaviour of Social Workers

Finally the social workers commented frequently on
the impact it had on their professional behaviour:

> "I guess I had a different attitude as far
> as my relationship with all clients is concerned.
> I felt before the seminar that there were barriers
> within which social workers must be constrained.
> As a result of the seminar the barriers or
> roles seem to have changed. I guess I am more
> flexible in dealing with clients now."

> "I became more tolerant of views diverse from
> my own. This was particularly true in my
> relationship with my colleagues."

> "My own clients seem more as equals to me
> after the seminar. That holds true for new
> clients as well I have noticed."

> "I was more inclined to talk person-to-person
> in cases after the seminar. The interesting thing
> is that I saw the clients as persons rather
> than as recipients, and in general our whole
> way of interacting seemed more human and more
> real."

The Effect of Personal Experience on Alienation

The reader may ask how these personal experiences have
a bearing on the process of alienation within the
welfare system. It is a premise of the present study

that the antitheses of alienation are the processes
of openness, good communication and trust, which were
generated through the confrontation laboratories.
However, some participants commented specifically on
the fact that the seminars were useful to them in
terms of understanding alienation in the welfare
system. As one put it:

> *"I was able to see for the first time by
> means of a group experience in a kind of
> human laboratory, alienation in action."*

Undoubtedly this occurred not only in the one ex-
perience where destructive competition was set up
between the two groups, but also in the interactions
which occurred during the T-group sessions where
people reacted to each other in various degrees of
openness and various forms of hostility and defen-
siveness. The process which was first of all to act
in a controlled way within a rather artificial
laboratory setting, and then to analyze the activity
before acting again, provided an excellent opportun-
ity for people to observe these processes as
biologists might look at the activity of a culture
in a test tube. The comments of these participants
seemed to reflect this:

> *"I was able to see how easy it is to be
> alienated - and to see how easy it is to
> cause alienation."*

One social worker commented that one of the most
important things for her was to have demonstrated
before her eyes during the group processes, the
fact that:

> *"One is able to do something about
> alienation."*

Another mentioned that an impressive aspect of the
seminar was:

> *"Seeing how different persons were affected
> in their everyday lives by forces of
> alienation - it seemed to have very different
> effects on different people."*

Major Drawbacks or Disadvantages Associated
With the Seminar

Limited Scope

All participants, when asked about disadvantages
or drawbacks, emphasized that more levels of
administration should be involved in the group
sessions. By this they meant, persons such as ad-
ministrators above the social worker and stenographers
and "all office people" below the social worker
should also be in attendance at such sessions. It
was common throughout the group sessions for both
workers and recipients to comment from time to
time, "the most important people are not here." By
this they meant the administration.

From the fairly sparsely filled out question-
naires turned in by administrators after the
seminar, it appeared that some of them took participation
in the seminar as an "official duty." On the other
hand, some of the administrators were sincerely and
completely dedicated to the process of improving communi-
cations through frank discussion, and had to go
to some extreme to provide enough time to be available
at the beginning and ending of the sessions. As it
has already been stated the administrators were under
unusual pressure at this time due to peculiar pressures
among the labour force in British Columbia which were
adding to the welfare problems of the Province.
However, whether this was the cause or whether there
is a general lack of enthusiasm for a participative type
of communication session, it is difficult to say. The
facts are that only five or six administrators were in
attendance and, in fairness to them, it must be stated that
the design of the confrontation was such that their parti-
cipation was not asked for, for the other days of the
session. Some administrators said quite candidly that
they would have appreciated an invitation to take part
during the entire four day period. This undoubtedly would
also be true of other office personnel who were left out of
our design.

Little Follow-Up

In the opinion of participants and social workers, there
should have been more follow-up sessions after the seminar

was over. One social worker noted:

"The seminars were handled well but
they left me a little depressed. It
was an unreal setting, and then to return
to the day-to-day office routines was
difficult. I think we needed more
follow-up."

This comment, which is typical of many, suggests
that participants were deeply immersed for a short
period of time, in the process which was not
directly related to their regular professional
activities. They were then given little assistance
in adopting new ideas and new skills learned
during the seminar to the needs of their regular
professional routine.

Little Preparatory Information

Others commented that there had not been enough
advance notice of the seminar. By this they
meant that a more complete explanation of the
purposes and the processes to be entered into during
the seminar should be provided for participants prior
to their attendance. Unlike the study done in
Manitoba, the seminar preparations in British Columbia
were rushed due to the unusual pressures on the Department
and the normal process of providing advanced information
was in some cases short-circuited.

Unequal Male/Female Ratio

Another suggestion about improvement in the seminar
was that there should be an equal distribution of
sexes. It is more typical for both the social
workers and the recipients to be female than male,
and in the case of the seminar the preponderance
of females perhaps put some strain on communication.
It certainly seems to be a good suggestion that
sexes should be equally balanced for a seminar of
this type.

Uneasiness of Social Workers

There seemed to be a difference in opinion about
the effectiveness of the encounter in bringing the
two groups together. Some social workers stated
that at times they felt threatened. The recipients

had an 'open season' attacking them without under-
standing their situation, that is, that they were
caught between recipient and administrators. The
recipients on the other hand articulated a profound
and sincere sympathy for the workers' situation
and showed that they fully understood the workers'
limitations. Many of the recipients felt the social
workers' uneasiness was due chiefly to the absence
of administrators during the bulk of the seminar.
It seemed strange that the workers often did not
sense this sympathetic attitude on the part of the
recipients during the session.

Non-Representative Recipient Group

Most of those interviewed commented at some point
that the recipient group was not truly representative.
They pointed out that this group was chosen especially
for the ability of the individuals to articulate
their problems and to become active in group activi-
ties. Because of this most of the social workers
were a bit cynical about the possibility of broadening
the application of this technique. Many of the
recipients observed that the abilities of all recip-
ients are as far-reaching as the ubiquitous "good"
in people, and felt that although some others might
not be so articulate, they could still be brought
out of their shells by the seminar situation and con-
tribute as well as gain for themselves. Most of the
participants would like to see this tried again, using
a randomly picked recipient group on a larger scale.

We have tried to describe the reactions of the parti-
cipants to the seminar both immediately at its
conclusion and from the perspective of three to five
weeks later. While an outline of hour-to-hour activ-
ities does give some feel for what went on, it leaves
much unstated as to the dramatic impact which was
achieved. To this end we have asked a participant
to describe in a rather existential way his recollec-
tions of the seminar. This is contained in the
following chapter.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE SOCIAL WORKER

CHAPTER IV

IMPRESSIONS OF THE SOCIAL WORKER

Because of the experimental nature of this program
it is difficult to capture on paper the full impact
of what occurred. This is complicated by the fact
that each participant seemed to bring different ex-
pectations and experiences to the seminar and take
away a unique set of recollections and new insights.
To provide the reader with a typcial view of what
went on, we asked Mr. Owen McCooey, who is a social
worker in North Vancouver, to describe from his own
personal point of view what went on within him during
the four days of the seminar. His account is repro-
duced, unedited, below and will perhaps give the
reader a more vivid impression of the encounter
sessions than could be achieved through statistical
tables or a long series of quotes.

Impressions of Social Worker Owen McCooey, North Vancouver,
British Columbia.

She touched my head at breakfast. Moments before I
had felt apprehensive about the rush of feelings I was
having about myself and other people. These feelings
were in sharp contrast to ones I had before the
seminar. I responded to her gesture in a natural and
open manner and smiled in appreciation for helping me
when I most needed reassurance.

I was the last person who felt alienated. I could have
easily pointed to other poeple who I felt were alienated.
What I became more aware of during the course of the
seminar was my own alienation to myself and in turn to
other people. I had always been a cautious person
never allowing my true feelings about myself, other
people and situations to surface perhaps for fear that
I would be cast in a bad light, or be embarrassed or
be hurt. I knew how to respond to people in an aloof,
reserved, and controlled manner. However, the people
at the seminar forced me to face myself openly and
honestly because I felt everyone involved in the
seminar had committed himself with sincerity and trust.

"Who am I" was an exercise that caught me by surprise.
Do you mean I have to write down ten points about
myself and show them to all the people in this room?
I can't do it. What will people think? Look at them
writing away. Time is almost up. I have got three
points down. Surely I must have some more points. If
I move fast enough maybe they won't be able to read them.
I can't stand people making fun of me. Oh come on now
you don't have to read it. Hey, this is too much,
there are three people reading mine. They are smiling
at me. Just a minute I didn't finish reading yours.
Just think the psychiatrist said he is neurotic. I have
to find out how she describes herself. Oh, that's not
how I thought about her. I wish we could talk. This
is fun.

I have to stare into my partner's eyes. I sure wish I
could look away. What if someone saw me. I just can't
hold my eyes in one place. His eyes are sure small.
I wonder if he feels as embarrassed as I do. I have
to shift my eyes. Its like a game, each time I shift
my eyes he smiles. One point for his side. Time's up.
Boy that pool looks great. I wonder if we are going to
do this kind of thing morning, noon and night.

What? How can you talk to a person when you are back
to back. Turn your head this way I am talking to you
from this side. I still feel embarrassed. You do too?
I wish I knew what to say. This silence between us
is hard. What? Yeh! I think so.

Now what - hold hands and stare silently again. He's
not going to make any points this time. I wish I could
stop my grin from twitching at the edges.

Now hold hands, no talking, and close your eyes. My
arms feel more relaxed. They are not as stiff as they
were. He's got a firm grip. His hands are rough. I
wonder what he does for a living.

I din't want to talk first. I'm glad I wasn't chosen
to tell the group how I felt about the exercises. What
am I going to say when my turn comes. You felt that way
about it? So did I. I'll have to remember that one.
It's my turn. I felt awkaward and embarrassed, but I
felt curious and interested in one exercise and - time's
up - but I have more to say!

Do you feel as tired as I do? I think I'll go for
a swim before supper. I don't know why but I feel
I have concentrated really hard. It's just like
the pressure I felt writing final exams.

It's funny I didn't really want to come to the
seminar, but I am glad I did. I wonder what we are
going to do tonight?

I wish he wouldn't explain things so quickly. I
don't really understand that last point. Feedback!
I wish everyone wouldn't raise their hands and say
they understand. I don't! When A tells B how he
feels about B is feedback? I don't understand, but
I'll put my hand up anyway.

The red group will meet in room 11 and the green
group will meet in room 14.

I can't stand sitting on chairs. I may as well take
my shoes off and sit on the floor - it's more com-
fortable, besides we'll probably be here for a long
time. I wish he would shut up! If we want to be
silent and not say anything let's be silent. Its
funny how some people have to talk all the time and
can't just sit silently. I wish she wasn't so inter-
ested in trying to get the others to talk. She's
just baiting her. Now he is in the act. I don't like
him. I wish the group leader would say something. I
like the white stones on the roof across the courtyard.
The sunset is really beautiful. Maybe it will be
sunny tomorrow and I can get some more tan. I knew it,
egg the group on, make them feel bad for having hurt
your feelings in not understanding feedback. Come on
you guys, don't be sucked in by his act. He is doing
it on purpose to make you mad. I thought so. She
can't stand to have her fingers smacked. Well go ahead
and ask him to explain things, but he won't.

What do you mean - just because I am sitting her
quietly and feeling relaxed doesn't mean I am holding
back. I don't understand feedback, but I sure know
that what you have been talking about is not feedback.
You haven't told me anything about how you feel. Why
do you always start your sentence with you? That
doesn't tell me anything. I wonder if I know what I am
talking about? The group leader doesn't seem to be
listening. I wonder if he is upset about what I am
saying. I'll play it cautiously and say I don't under-
stand feedback, but, that way I can't be criticized
because I told him I didn't understand.

Now I want the green group to form a circle around the red group. I want the green group to give feedback to the red group and the red group is not to speak until their turn.

I'll have to remember this, this is a good way of communicating - one person speaking at a time.

I really feel tired, I wonder if there is any more beer in the fridge?

I felt, our group, (remember you're not supposed to judge and make opinions), I mean, I felt I didn't understand what feedback was all about, but I feel I do now. I feel good and I feel I have learned something about how the other person feels towards me. I wish I could talk faster. I must sound like a record slowed right down. I hope I am talking feedback.

I walked with the others down to a room for coffee and beer. I felt good inside. I felt closer to the people at the seminar and I didn't feel quite so threatened by not knowing what was happening. I felt the group's feelings had changed from caution to open mirth and fun.

I couldn't get to sleep right away. I felt tired and wanted to talk about how I felt.

I somehow felt different from the past day's intense experience. I didn't feel the need to hold back. I felt good about being open and less on guard, and I listened to the others talk about how they felt and it was good to know that I wasn't the only one who was sharing some of their thoughts. I no longer felt the need to think about doing things and saying things and felt more confident about being spontaneous and natural and to hell with whether or not I looked or sounded silly in doing or saying what I did. Its not right not to care. You have to care. However, the spontaneity that I felt was a positive spontaneity and somehow the principles of the exercises that were quickly explained, came back to mind and I realized that I had been applying the principles unconsciously.

I was great to think that today is the first day of the rest of my life. I tossed that around before I could get to sleep and got up and looked out the window at a field, and at the city in the distance thinking that this is really great. Why walk around burdened down with all the bad and negative things that have happened.

Don't walk looking back over your shoulder all the
time. LOOK AHEAD. Enjoy the here and now. Act,
critique, act. But you can't be spontaneous and
positive and act on your feelings. It's not right,
but if you act, and it's a bad reaction, then learn
from it and be prepared to act more positively the
next time. Then I can enjoy the here and now. Why
not? I've got to get some sleep. I've never felt
so good and so tired at the same time. I feel great.

What are your strengths? You have three minutes to
tell your group what your strengths are and then
listen and don't talk while your group takes five
minutes to tell you what they feel are your strengths.
I hope I'm not the first one. What am I going to
say. I can only think of two things. There must be
more. Please somebody say something. Who's going to
be first, I must have some strengths. What am I
going to say for three minutes. Good she started. I
really like her. She's stuck. What are your strengths?
It sure is a long three minutes. What am I going to
say. I never thought of that one, I'll have to re-
member what she said. Well, almost everyone had had
his turn. There is no way out. I may as well go
next. I've run out already. What are your strengths?
...Just a minute, give me a chance to think. Oh yes.
I'm going to have another cigarette. Do you really
see me that way. I have to listen and look at the
person in the eye. I wish I could stop shaking. Is
this the way you feel about me. I didn't know that
people saw these things in me. Perhaps I don't have
to try so hard to impress people. But it is a cultural
no, no, to think about how good you are and what
strengths you have. It's funny I feel embarrassed
and yet in the back of my mind I was always aware of
my strengths, but never thought about them. If you
ask me what my negative points were I could sure tell
you.

After this exercise I felt close to each individual
in the group. I felt more aware of myself and I was
amazed by the group's strengths, skills, and talents.
I could only think back to my first day at the seminar
and how I had wiped out with a glance and dismissed
some of the people for some silly and superficial
reason. I wouldn't have even bothered with them and
all of a sudden I was very much aware of how beautiful
they were when I took the time to look carefully, and
find the good in each one of them, as they had found
something good in me. I had to reappraise my former
nit-picking ways and concern for my faults rather than
making use of the strengths I possessed. I couldn't

believe people felt so much good in me. YOU, YOU THERE,
SEE ME!

Somehow when the two groups gathered after this exer-
cise to listen to one another's feelings about this
experience I felt a numbness about the room. Laughter
broke out over nothing, but it was a different kind
of laughter, a joyous, deep, full and hearty kind. A
kind of laughter I had never heard or experienced.

When I went to bed I couldn't get to sleep again. I
got up and I had to talk and I felt good about opening
up and telling others how I felt. I didn't think about
it, but said what I felt. I thought how much better,
in an office or family situation, everything would be
if we'd let others know how we postively saw one another
rather than constantly picking out the person's critical
points. How much more could be accomplished by a few
words of praise and the passed on effects of the praise
to others. I felt more good could be and can be
accomplished. Today is the first day of the rest of my
life.

I felt excited about the experiences of this seminar,
but felt afraid that somehow it was only real in the
seminar setting and it would be back to the old
attitudes and realities of the past when the seminar
was over. I desperately wanted to be able to put into
practise what I had learned. I wanted to hold on to
my happy sense of well-being and how I felt towards
other people for as long as I could.

You must be kidding? Why did you mark your line so
close to the beginning. I feel that's where I am
right now and I feel excited about what is yet to be
accomplished in the future. I feel I have only just
begun.

Somehow I surprised myself that I really knew all
along where I was at and what I really wanted to
accomplish. I had always wondered about where I
wanted to go in my working world. Did I want to be an
important and successful person at the end of my life?
Did I want two cars, and a fancy home with a swimming
pool? When I wrote my autobiography it all came out
spontaneously how I defined my own success and those
things I would have liked to have accomplished. Again
I felt good about this open and natural and spontaneous
confrontation with my feelings. I hoped I would not

think about my feelings, but rely on them in future.
I felt more responsive towards other people. I felt
a lessening of my former preoccupation of thinking
and prejudging the things I said and did. I felt
good about being spontaneous.

1. Experiences.

2. Things I do well.

3. Things I do poorly.

4. Things I would like to stop doing .

5. Things I would like to do well.

6. Experiences, I would like to have.

7. Things to be realized.

8. Things that I would like to start doing.

When I was asked three questions and I was required
to give short spontaneous answers to them, I did not
have to think too hard about them. I said what I felt
and I felt a new sense of perspective and excitement
about thinking in a new fashion, thinking in the here
and now.

> *"Today is the first day of the rest of
> my life"*

It was a simple task, a competition between the two
groups in which individuals were chosen to fill certain
positions, and in a certain designated time limit select
from 40 questions, 10, put them in the order of impor-
tance as seen by the group.

The group was alone in this task and the group leader
wasn't present. Instant bedlam broke out. Everyone
had a plan, a point of view, or an opinion as to how the
task should be accomplished. Everyone was talking at
once and then shouting. Hostility and tension started to
build. Suddenly, everyone in the group realized that
all the things we had learned we had forgotten - thrown
out the window. I remembered that we had been told that
the seminar was in a sense a microcosm of the welfare
system. With this realization, and time running out, we

worked out a way of co-operating with one another, using one another's skills and strengths and accomplished the task as a group which we had been asked to accomplish. This was an experience that made me feel humble because I realized, as spokesman of this group, how difficult it was to lead and yet at the same time to be aware of each individual's feelings in the group. I also felt happy for having this experience because it was the first time that I had a chance to put into practice what I had learned. I had been afraid that when the time came to leave the seminar that I would forget what I had learned.

Friday, the last day of the seminar, I didn't want to leave. I felt high. I wanted to know that what I had learned I would retain and use when I went to my ordinary day-to-day routine. I was afraid that everything I had learned would be swept aware, bit by bit. The confrontation with the world outside would tell.

I wondered how the administrators would respond to the sensitivity exercises. I felt reluctant to expose my feelings in front of them by going through the exercises with them. I wondered if they would pass them off lightly or make fun of them. I questioned whether they would understand and could catch a glimpse or a sense of what the seminar meant to me. Again, my reserve was up. I was judging their reactions to see if they would be approving or disapproving. Bit by bit, however, I did not react to them as men with positions, but I felt respect for them for having come to the seminar and participated as freely as they did. I felt that if this had been a valid experience for me then I should not invalidate the experience by not being honest and direct about the expression of my feelings. Again group pressure and my general elation about how I felt quickly removed any doubt or reserve from my mind.

I felt it difficult to leave the seminar when the time came to do so. I was feeling good. I felt close to all the people that I had met.

I wondered if I would have a rough experience returning to the city. I wanted to hold on to my good feelings for as long as possible thinking that within a few hours I would be back against people and situations that frustrated me. I wondered if I could retain what I had learned and use it in my daily life.

Three weeks have passed since the seminar - I find it difficult to describe exactly how I feel or what has

happened to me. Something has happened and the difference is not quite as marked as the before picture of a fat man who in his after picture is skinny.

I am waiting to cross a street and a child in the back seat of a car is looking at me with a full and comfortable gaze. I wonder to myself what has inhibited me in finding it difficult to be able to do so now. To the child, it is a natural response. The light changes, the car moves on, and I am sure something else will interest the child's gaze.

I feel happy at a particular moment walking in a busy section of the city and I am suddenly aware that my eyes are neither up or down, or sideways, but looking straight ahead in a comfortable way, occasionally catching the glimpse of other people's eyes and I am surprised and amused that they shift their eyes.

At work, if a person or situation frustrates me or makes me feel angry now, I feel frustrated or angry at that particular moment. I do not find myself accumulating a dayload of frustrations and anger at the expense of all other experiences. I find I am accomplishing more work and the more work I accomplish, the better I feel about myself and my abilities.

I find it difficult to live in the here and now and experience life as a moment to moment experience. I find it difficult to break old habits, old thoughts, and old ways of doing things. Yet I find myself asking myself, how do you feel? Quite often what I am thinking and feeling is quite different from what I am doing or suppposed to be doing. I find myself listening to someone else. I find myself eating a delicious meal and thinking about some situation that bothered me hours before and letting myself get carried away on what I would have done and all at the expense of the enjoyment of a delicious meal.

I find myself recalling things from the seminar such as:

ways to be towards each other to facilitiate growth.

1. Regard (not indifferent)

2. Empathy (active listening)

3. Congruence (similarity between feelings and behaviour)

4. Genuineness (meaning what you say)

5. Openness (direct report of feelings)

6. Confrontation (not let other people <u>kid themselves</u>)

7. Respecting the others' separateness

not in point form, but in terms of reminders to myself.
You are not being open. You are not saying what you feel.
Your feelings are different from your behaviour. These
reminders come to mind in given situations and I find
myself applying them, sometimes awkwardly and sometime
confidentially with positive feedback as a consequence.
I feel a bit naked because there is no escape in the here
and now. I find it more difficult to return to the past
or escape into the future.

I feel awkward and unsure of myself, yet there is a
feeling inside of me now that I am responding to more
and more and that is saying - WOW - this is fantastic -
to feel at all times together as a person, to feel that
today, but more in particular, this moment is indeed the
first moment, the first day of the rest of my life; and
I feel great.

FINDINGS

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The raison d'etre of this study was founded on
the assumption that it is difficult for people to
answer quickly about a problem as complex as a
welfare system. We, therefore, spent much time
developing trust and good communication between
both social workers and recipients in the hope
that through this process would emerge, at various
times and in a variety of ways, clues to what
could be done to reduce alienation. This chapter
will therefore not be typical of research projects
which have a more formal structure and, in a step-
by-step procedure, answer a given number of hypo-
theses as true or false depending on the way the data
has fallen. We have to be more impressionistic, but
I believe that through the impressions that will be
presented the reader will gain a better perspective
of "what is wrong" with the system and, therefore,
how reduction to alienation might be achieved.

One precautionary note should be made. It is impor-
tant that we not take at face value people's sugges-
tions about what is really wrong with the problem.
What we are attempting to do in the following
chapters is draw together some important themes that
emerged, often in a tangential way. Later we will
attempt to develop recommendations and hypotheses for
future studies so that these concepts can be explored and
validated.

How Does A System Alienate?

Graphic presentations of how the system alienates are
presented from two very different sources. The first
is a description by a recipient of an incident which
alienated her.

> "First, I must say after this session here,
> this will not apply ever again to me - Now
> I know who I am!
>
> Now, this is what took place and has
> continually happened over two years. I
> walk two miles in a state of depression -
> again, I must ask for some help. Enter,

45

climb stairs through government building;
walk the hall with arrows plainly marking
way to welfare. Tell clerk who I am for
the umpteenth time; seated in hall, knees
pulled up so people going in and out,
passing will not step on me. In time,
called by name - loud and clear - to go to
so and so room. This room is always to me
down at the far end of the long hall.
Result - I'm humiliated, discouraged and
angry - ready to do battle or scream or
cry. Overloaded worker wants to know what
do I want. I'd like to say, 'to be back
to work; any kind with a wage big enough to
take me away from here forever.' I hate
you! and I hate me. You can go to _____.
But, I bury this and find myself whining
out my need be it clothing for the kids or
whatever.

Out comes folder, checkoff list - Yes, I
can - No, I can't; little bits of conver-
sation, interrupted by one or more phone
calls. Then back down the long hall and
home to take out (by now) rage on family,
the dog or any other poor soul who happens
by as I build up alienation."

The second instance was reported by the supervisor of
interviewers for this project who, after talking with
both social workers and recipients about the seminar
some three to five weeks after it had concluded, wrote
as part of his report the following section:

"During the interview, the recipients had
many observations regarding the atmos-
phere of the welfare offices themselves.
We were able to verify their observations
in our visits to the offices to see the
social workers. I'm sure that the offices
were designed by Franz Kafka. A counter
divided the recipient's waiting area from
the mass of desks strewn with forms of all
colours. People are greeted at the counter
by the sourest faces and the most beligerent
of tones in "What do you want." The
recipient is then invited to sit on the bench
for several hours or days and listen to the
meaningless chatter of the office workers
who are constantly telling welfare jokes (similar
to Polish jokes) or making such statements

46

*as 'Look at this application. With his
assets I'm wondering why I don't go on welfare.
(chorus of ha ha ha's).' The recipient is given
the impression that he is committing a crime
by applying for assistance and disturbing the
routine of the office staff on an otherwise
sunny day. In contrast to this we made two
visits to a drop-in centre called Frog Hollow
where recipients meet social workers in an old
house and seem to face each other as equals
with no desk or counter dividing their worlds.
At Frog Hollow applicants receive advice and
counselling from other recipients as well as
from the staff (who are indistinguishable from
recipients in both dress and attitude). The
social worker whom I interviewed there felt that
one of the biggest problems of the welfare system
was the separation of assistance from other
community activities. She felt that recipients
shouldn't be differentiated either in name or
process from the community receiving services
as a whole. At Frog Hollow it seems to work."*

Basic Problems of the System

We asked participants what they thought was the basic
problem area in the system. Table 5.1 reveals that 75%
find the basic problem to be the social attitudes
which create the ideology of the system. We conclude
then that the social workers and recipients for the
most part see the roots of the problem in the attitudes
of the community towards people on welfare, and that
the only other major contributing factor is the way the
system is administered.

As part of the confrontation procedure, the participants
(made up not only of recipients and social workers, but
also administrators) were asked to develop important
issues or problems facing the system and the people in
it. In Appendix A, a complete list of the 40 problems
is recorded. Later these 40 issues were ranked by
the participants and the following ten topics received
the highest ranking. They are given in the order of
their importance as viewed by the participants.

Top 10 Important Issues (Problems)
According to Participants

1. Need adequate number of staff with
    sensitivity for people.

2. Interpet the delivery of services to
    the community.

            - most people have skills
              they want to use rather
              than get welfare.

3. Improve the image of the welfare
    recipient (not free loader - 2nd
    class bums).

4. Get as much stability for children
    in a foster home as possible.

5. Development of resources in the
    community.

6. Eliminate overlapping services.

7. Case loads are too large especially
    with all the paperwork.

8. Lack of personal interest of social
    worker for client - just another number.

9. Use of staff - when to use trained
    staff, aids, recipients.

10. Refined way of consulting field staff
    when policy decisions are to be made.

            - gives meaning to field staff.

These topics appear to focus on three major features
of the system. Most commonly mentioned are admin-
istrative issues such as the number of staff, the
stability of foster homes, overlap in services, etc.
Therefore, we might conclude that the participants
see the most important issues as changes in adminis-
trative policies and procedures. This is not incon-
sistent with saying that the roots of the problem
are in the communities' attitudes. Certainly it would

appear that while attitudes may change over a long period of time and they do present some limits to which administrative innovation cannot accede, the immediate opportunities for revision in the system appear to lie within the scope of better administrative practices.

The other two features of these top ten issues are: the humanizing effect as represented in a staff "with sensitivity for people," and "lack of personal interest of social worker for client"; and community image "interpret the delivery of services to the community," and "improve the image of the welfare recipients." These two issues suggest that in the view of the participants it would be useful to provide more human relations skills to staff, and to embark on a program of community education to tell John Q. citizen about the services of the welfare department and the people receiving the services.

The Administrator

Administrators did not play a large part as participants in this procedure. They were there on the morning of the first day and the afternoon of the last day, and were represented by only five members as opposed to the 12 recipients and 11 social workers. The results then must be taken as suggestive, but there are some interesting areas which bear further investigation.

The most outstanding differences in the ratings of the clients and administrators are on the following issues:

> *"There is an age barrier to getting jobs or job training for older people."*
>
> *"More free recreation services for children who can't afford them."*
>
> *"Impossible to transfer foster children from one district to another."*
>
> *"An old, experienced client should be made available to clients applying for the first time."*

49

These issues, which are more concrete in their nature, were rated much higher by recipients than administrators. Generally higher ratings were given by administrators to more global types of issues such as, *"Improving the image of the welfare recipient (not free loader, second-class bums)."* Perhaps one of the great skills of administration is to be able to see issues broadly and, at the same time, have precise understanding about concrete details of the system. Recipients, however, do not have any complaints about administrators. Their general reaction to administrators was "big men" who are essentially helpful and benign in their relationship with the recipient.

The social workers, on the other hand, feel a lack of communication within the Welfare Department. Their comments and suggestions imply that they believe administrative procedures could be improved, not only for a more pleasant working atmosphere but for a more efficient system.

> *"The social worker has to feel that he is a part of a team, part of decision making, and everyone in the Department should be free to question procedures."*

> *"You have to feel that you have the trust of your supervisor to do a decent job."*

> *"The administration does not clearly define areas of responsibility and expectation. The confidence of the worker and the way it is measured is equally hazy."*

> *"Less bureaucracy and red tape should be involved between various levels in our Department."*

> *"We need to open the lines of communication."*

> *"What is needed is to improve communication, leadership and the general organization of the Department. With better administration, there would be*

> *more interaction - that is, two-way*
> *communication based on reality rather*
> *than just giving lip service to cliches."*

> *"The Department should be broken down*
> *into clearly defined functions."*

These comments seem to suggest that better inter-
personal communication and clearly defined functions,
along with functions for workers and methods for
evaluating these functions, are desired by the social
workers. An example of what seems to be symptomatic
of a need for better communication is the fact that
many social workers commented on the fact that admin-
istrators don't have a clear knowledge and under-
standing of the volume of work social workers are
required to do. While this may or may not be the
case, it is the perception of many workers. On the
other hand, administrators give third order of im-
portance to the issue "lack of personal interest of
social workers for clients - just another number."
They rate this higher than either social workers or
recipients which suggests that they place some blame
on social workers for a lack of personal interest.
Again, whether this is true or not is not an important
issue. The fact is a lack of understanding and trust
is felt between these two groups which must come from
a constriction in free communication between the two.
From evidence such as this, one of our recommendations
in the next chapter deals specifically with the need
to improve communication between these two important
segments of the welfare delivery system.

The Social Worker

The social worker finds himself at a pressure spot in
the system where, on the one hand he must satisfy the
requirements of the administration and, on the other
hand, he feels an important need to help recipients.
These antagonistic forces in the social workers' ad-
ministration are heightened by the fact that the
worker knows his employment and economic welfare is
dependent on him functioning within the guidelines
set down by administration, yet he has relatively little
contact with administration. The major segment of his
time is devoted to face-to-face dealings with recipients

where the needs are obvious. The discrepacy between
the requirements of the administration and the
perceived needs of the recipients is one of the
frustrations voiced by many social workers. One
worker comments,

> *"The structure is as frustrating to*
> *social workers as to recipients. When*
> *the social worker says, 'no,' it is*
> *not his decision."*

Many recipients seem to be aware that social
workers are trapped between the official respon-
sibilities of the welfare system and their human
responsibilities to recipients. One stated it in
this way:

> *"Social workers' hands are tied up*
> *by administration and by the recipients.*
> *They are in the middle."*

Probably the most important factor in this contra-
diction of responsibilities arises because of the
social worker's strategic position within the
Welfare Department. The worker is implicitly ex-
pected to perform two functions - first, that of a
money giver and, second, that of a counsellor. The
social worker finds that one function can undermine
the other:

> *"Mixed functions undermine the*
> *self-respect of the social worker*
> *and recipient."*

From the point of view of the recipients, it is im-
possible for them to express a sincere opinion if
they have a constant fear of losing money when
discussing their problems with the social worker.
One stated it in this way:

> *"Eligibility to receive money should*
> *not be dependent upon impressions*
> *from counselling."*

The very nature of counselling requires that the
person in need of counselling have the sympathy of
the counsellor. In psychiatric practice, this
relationship cannot be exploited except under ex-
treme conditions, even in legal matters. Therefore,

a psychiatrist will not testify about information
contained in a therapeutic interview because this
information is privileged. The other extreme is
the one in which social workers and welfare assistants
find themselves - - not only are they to divulge
the information through their recording but, in fact,
have an obligation to the system to change the amount
of money given to the recipient if he is doing some-
thing that is "against regulations." It is easy to
see that such a double function makes it virtually
impossible for the social worker to be a good coun-
sellor and at the same time live up to his responsi-
bilities to administer state funds to recipients
according to regulations.

Table 5.2 summarizes the results of the question we
put to the participants. Note that the majority of
the participants, both social workers and clients,
are in favour of dividing this function. The par-
ticipants agreed to the separation for such reasons
as. *"It removes the idea of welfare being just a
cheque"*, or *"It leaves social workers to counsel
families who need it most,"* or, *"Eligibility to
receive money should not be dependent on impressions
from the counselling. Money giving is mainly a
clerical task."* The social workers who were in
favour of this division had many of the same kinds of
comments. They added the following considerations:

> *"Social workers are not trained for
> budgeting."*

> *"The division of functions would free
> social workers to work more closely
> with clients."*

For those who were opposed to the division of function,
the major reason was that

> *"Social workers know what the money
> needs are because of their intimate
> knowledge of the person's case."*

and, as one social worker put it,

>*"Money giving could become a cold*
>*thing if handled by clerks."*

Social Worker Training

Another problem which emerged during this study
was the inadequacy of social work training.
All participants we questioned concluded that
there needed to be an improvement in social work
training. All recipients and some of the social
workers felt that social workers should be pro-
vided with "More on-the-job-training." Recipients
emphasized that social workers should have more
personal experiences. For example, they said,
"Workers should live as we do on welfare for
at least one month" or, *"Workers should spend*
time as observers in all levels of the welfare
program." It is interesting to note that the
recipients asked for improved education of all
office personnel, because of the importance of
these clerical people to the recipient during
his first contact with the Welfare Department.
As one recipient put it, *"Office people create*
barriers first - they do damage unknowingly.
This happens before the recipient even sees a
social worker. By that time, the recipients are
hostile to the entire process and they reflect
this on to the social worker when they meet
him.

The social workers,because most of them have
had training in social work, have more precise
suggestions about how education could be improved.
The majority of suggestions related to the
type of training they received during the seminar
which may only be a halo effect of that experi-
ence or may, in fact, be a legitimate suggestion
for improving social work training. At the
present time, at least one school of social work
(Calgary, Alberta) has moved toward heavy emphasis
on T-group training in preparation for an M.S.W.
The workers suggested, *"We should have sensitivity*

training." or, *"We need training towards counselling, particularly in group sessions, and towards better techniques for public relations."* There were also suggestions which implied that continuing education was important if professional social workers were to remain flexible with the constantly changing social situation. This is merely a trend seen through all the professions, suggesting continuing education as a prerequisite for continuing usefulness as a professional person.

The Recipient

For the recipient, the community with its pressures and prejudices is his greatest source of alienation. Recipients and social workers are very much aware of this fact as illustrated in Table 5.3. In the words of one social worker, *"We are conditioned to think a person who isn't working is a 'bum',so recipients feel that way too."* Unfortunately the present welfare system isn't perceived as doing much to rehabilitate people who legitimately need a hand to get back into the mainstream of society. Their perceptions of how the system works are contained in the following quotes:

> *"All you get is a cheque, that's no answer or help to overcoming your problems."*

> *"People aren't encouraged to become more efficient in the areas where they are most skilled or talented- The stigma of being on welfare makes them think that they are useless. It's like a sickness."*

> *"The system makes recipients relinquish financial responsibility because we treat them as if they cannot be trusted and we take most of the responsibility out of their hands."*

> *"Just the very fact that you get a handout from welfare is enough to keep you down."*

One of the major alienating factors appears to be the motivational and attitudinal effects of getting ground-down by the welfare system. One recipient put it this way, *"You become discouraged, frustrated. After a time, you're unsure if you can hold your*

own in the community when you've been on welfare."
Another stated, *"The harsh, unreceptive attitude
of welfare officials makes you feel low and
degraded and you start believing it. No one really
believes we'd even try."* Just being on welfare
makes obtaining employment even more difficult.
As one recipient pointed out, *"If you go for a job,
a black mark is against you right off the bat
because you've been on welfare."* Because the
welfare system is primarily geared to giving money
to those in need, rather than working at the pro-
blems which, if solved, would provide the person
with an avenue of escape from the system, recipients
develop a passive impression of themselves and
their life situation. As one states, *"You get the
impression that you're not needed. By that I mean
you're not encouraged to become useful."* Deserted
wives who form a large group of welfare recipients,
feel that they have to make a decision between their
family and the stigma of welfare.

> *"Your desire to keep your own family
> together traps you on welfare and the
> stigma keeps you alienated."*

For some, long term existence on miminal income
causes motivational collapse.

> *"You get into such a low income rut
> from which escape is difficult. People
> just give up."*

All these motivational factors are picked up or
inferred by recipients from the way they are treated
both in the community when they apply for a job,
and, perhaps even more importantly, by officials
of the welfare system. A glaring example of this is
the fact that a senior official of the British Columbia
Department of Welfare, was quoted in the press as
referring to people on welfare as "Deadbeats."
Whether he did in fact state this or not is not the
point, but we must report that many recipients in the
small number of 12 we interviewed were aware of this,
resented it strongly and commented to us on it when
we talked about their life situations.

It would be unjust to blame only the community and
the welfare system for the recipient's life on welfare.

Some recipients who are trapped on welfare are
not able to work because of their special personal
situations. There is a large group of deserted
wives who must remain on welfare if they wish to
keep their children with them. A second group is
the poorly educated. Their lack of education
presents a formidable barrier to self-improvement.
These forces, along with other areas which are
more numerous but less prevalent, act to make
recipients hold on to what they can be assured of
rather than trying for something that is more
risky. We asked, *"Do you think that recipients
would take a job when the salary is only 10%
higher than their present welfare cheque?"* Forty-
six per cent of the recipients answered none
would, but only 10% of the social workers think
that none would, as seen in Table 5.4. The
reasons for thinking that recipients would avail
themselves of a job at even a small increase in
income centered around a chance to be independent
and free of the system. It is interesting that
the social workers are more prone to believe this
than the recipients. When we looked at the
reasons why the participants thought that "none
would," there appeared to be many real forces
which hold people in the system. For example,
they would loose medical coverage which is pro-
vided for them as recipients of welfare. They
would also begin to be hounded by finance com-
panies who would take action to garnishee wages
but cannot get at them when they are on welfare.
Also, as some recipients pointed out, the taxes
and unemployment insurance which are deducted from
the pay cheques would eat up most of the 10%
advantage. It is interesting that others commen-
ted on the loss of the "security" of the welfare
system for those who took jobs.

All these comments seem to point to a danger in
the present administration of welfare which is an
"all or nothing" proposition. If people on
welfare are to be weaned away from it, it would
appear that this must be done in small stages
so that even if they don't get a welfare cheque,
once they begin to work, perhaps medical coverage
and protection from garnishee could be afforded
until they achieve some sort of stability. For
someone who is in desperate, financial conditions,

the "all or nothing" situation in welfare often
causes him to cling to what he has rather
than to run to something he doesn't trust.

The Welfare System

Some problems concerning the organization and the
procedure of the welfare system emerged in our
study. The general consensus was that more
information should be provided on the rights and
privileges of welfare recipients. Table 5.5
suggests that both the clients and workers are
of the opinion there is a great need to provide
more information.

Table 5.6 suggests the participants feel that
some welfare laws do invade the recipient's per-
sonal life. Examples of this were given by the
recipients in terms of lack of trust, *"I objected
to having to show my daughter's birth certificate;
they wouldn't believe my statement. ("Your word
and your explanations of situations are not
accepted.")* Other objections by recipients are
in terms of procedures and rules which demean them
as human beings. One example is, *"You have to
declare all earnings, even fifty cents."* Others
feel that welfare laws are unnecessarily arbitrary
in terms of moral judgments - e.g. you are not
allowed to have 'male houseguests'. Another
recipient recited a case that unwed mothers are
forced to sue the father of the child for support.
Another interesting comment by the recipients
was that often questions they are forced to
answer are not explained so that they do not get
the normal protection of understanding the
reason information is being collected.

Workers also contributed examples of how procedures
invade the sanctity of the personal lives of
recipients. They mentioned that, *"Recipients are
told how to spend money."* and *"Women are often ques-
tioned about male companionship."* In fact, for
a worker the most common invasions are questions
relating to the moral habits of the recipients,
their marital status and personal lives, which
questions do not bear directly on the need for
assistance.

Table 5.7 suggests that most participants feel there
are not adequate redress procedures for recipients to
appeal the decisions of social workers. Suggestions
were made by recipients on ways the welfare system
could be improved. Some of these may seem mundane but
they give insight into the little things that alienate.
One recipient suggested that social workers seem to be
too busy with paperwork to be able to relate to the
recipient in need.   Another criticism related to this
is, "there is an all business atmosphere" which has a
negative influence on the social worker-client relation-
ship. By this it is suggested that emphasis is on
getting out the welfare cheque rather than on understanding
the person with a view to relieving his problem and pro-
viding him with permanent rehabilitation.

Recipients suggested that social workers should "Learn
how to greet recipients" and "Refrain from saying what
to do -- but to suggest".   The most common recommendation
on the part of both recipients and social workers in
reference to the welfare system was that, "Open communi-
cation from top to bottom" be initiated".   Perhaps the
most important feature of the seminar was that it demon-
strated how concrete steps could be taken to open up this
two-way flow of communication between the administrators
and recipients.

TABLE 5.1

RESPONSES BY CLIENTS AND WORKER PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SEMINAR, TO THE QUESTION -

"Where do you think is the basic problem
area in the whole system?"

BASIC PROBLEM AREA	CLIENT	WORKER	TOTAL N	%
With the recipients themselves.				
Between the recipients and social workers.				
With the social workers themselves.				
Between the social workers and the administration.	2	0	2	9.5
With the administration itself and its' rules.	3	1	4	19.1
Social attitudes create the ideology of the system.	6	9	15	71.4
Total	11	10	21	100.0

TABLE 5.2

RESPONSES BY CLIENTS AND WORKER PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SEMINAR TO THE QUESTION -

"Do you think it would be useful to divide the
"money giving" and "counselling" into separate
jobs?"

	CLIENT	WORKER	TOTAL N	%
Yes	6	7	13	61.0
No	3	1	4	19.5
Don't know	2	2	4	19.5
Total	11	10	21	100.0

TABLE 5.3

RESPONSES BY CLIENTS AND WORKER PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SEMINAR TO THE QUESTION -

"Do you think the community thinks it is
shameful for people to be on welfare?"

	CLIENT	WORKER	TOTAL N	%
Most people do	10	8	18	85.7
Some people do	1	2	3	14.3
None do	0	0	-	-
Total	11	10	21	100.0

TABLE 5.4

RESPONSES BY CLIENTS AND WORKER PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SEMINAR TO THE QUESTION

"Do you think that recipients would take a
job when the salary is only 10% higher than
their present welfare cheque?"

	CLIENT	WORKER	TOTAL N	TOTAL %
Almost all would	2	4	6	28.6
Some would	4	5	9	42.8
None would	5	1	6	28.6
Total	11	10	21	100.0

TABLE 5.5

RESPONSES BY CLIENTS AND WORKER PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SEMINAR TO THE QUESTION -

"Do you think there is a need to provide
recipients with more information concerning
their rights and priviledges?"

	CLIENT	WORKER	TOTAL N	TOTAL %
Great need	11	8	19	90.5
Fair need		2	2	9.5
No need				
Total	11	10	21	100.0

TABLE 5.6

RESPONSES BY CLIENTS AND WORKER PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SEMINAR TO THE QUESTION -

"Do you think that some welfare laws invade
the recipient's personal life?"

	CLIENT	WORKER	TOTAL N	TOTAL %
Yes	7	8	15	71.4
No	3	1	4	19.1
Don't know	1	1	2	9.5
Total	11	10	21	100.0

TABLE 5.7

RESPONSES BY CLIENTS AND WORKER PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SEMINAR TO THE QUESTION -

"Do you think there are adequate procedures
for a recipient to appeal a social worker's
decision?"

	CLIENT	WORKER	TOTAL N	TOTAL %
Yes	1	4	5	23.8
No	8	5	13	61.9
Don't know	2	1	3	14.3
Total	11	10	21	100.0

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Separate the "Money Giving" and "Counselling" Functions

The money giving functions should be semi-automated and handled by clerical help along with a computer, using a point system. People should be asked to fill out a form very similar to an Income Tax Form, and if they have difficulty a clerical assistant should help them. The form could be quickly scored and a cheque issued. Normal control and auditing procedures could be developed in this system.

In a separate division, couselling could be offered for recipients. It may be valuable for the Welfare Department to purchase such counselling from private agencies, just as they now purchase medical services. Even if this were done the referral of clients to resources in the community for legal assistance, psychotherapy, etc. would appear to be an important counselling function.

2. "All or Nothing" Welfare System Should Be Changed

The regulation requirement that people do not work at all, should be revised so that as a person improves his ability to earn, his benefits are reduced. It would appear that such a gradual reduction in assistance would encourage recipients to try to take even part time jobs to improve themselves. It would also encourage them to experiment with different ways of providing for themselves, realizing that they weren't forfeiting support from the welfare system. This type of program would have to reward the recipient for extra work so that he got a little extra in his pocket if he did part time work rather than just stay at home and collect welfare.

3. More Sensitivity Training in Social Work Education

While it seems unfair to ask students of Social Work to live in a welfare community on a welfare income for a period of time, it does seem important that they develop sensitivity to their own impact on welfare recipients.

The laboratory experiences provided by this experiment seem to be genuinely appreciated by the workers. Perhaps the most important feature was that the worker was asked to express his own feelings. Traditional Freudian psychology in casework represses personal reactions and only reflects back to the client what the client's reactions are (for example, "you seem hostile today, Mr. Jones" is acceptable, but "you make me mad, Mr. Jones" is not.) The result appears to be to make social workers very analytical and intellectual in their interaction with recipients but, at the same time, often devoid of much insight into their own reactions and feelings toward recipients. However, these reactions do come across loud and clear and often have a devastating alienating effect.

Recipient Advisory or Consultant Groups

Recipient groups could be used as advisory bodies for framing welfare policy. They would be a valuable sounding board to try out new programs and obtain critiques of present operating procedures.

Recipient groups could also act as consultants in specific cases, meeting with the social workers and bringing to their attention the attitudes and living conditions in the client's area, which would allow the workers to make a more valuable diagnosis and treatment plan. Also, by working groups it is possible for the social worker to operate at a different level whereby he is a facilitator providing a vehicle for clients to discuss their mutual problems and work out their own solutions in a much healthier and less dependent way.

Recipients Could Perform Valuable Services in the Welfare Offices

If the welfare officers are overtaxed, it would seem that a great pool of existing resources might be used. Assuming that some type of compensation over and above their welfare cheques could be given for this kind of assistance, and assuming that a large number of people on welfare would appreciate the opportunity of "doing something" to raise their personal esteem, the following duties seem obvious for some

65

of the recipient group:

a) Receiving new recipients and helping them to adjust to the problems and challenges of being on welfare. Also, helping them to fill out forms and advising on ways to save money and economize.

b) Contacting clients in their homes and visiting old people, foster parents and one-person families to provide social stimulation and just general comfort.

c) Assist the day-care centres.

d) Provide transportation for people who are handicapped or living in remote areas.

e) Assist in general clerical work, of a non-confidential nature.

f) Some recipients are unusually talented at understanding socio-emotional problems and with some supervision could provide assistance in counselling on simple but painful personal problems of other recipients.

g) Man a telephone answering system to assist in simple but irritating daily problems of other recipients.

6. Group Counselling

The scarce resources of trained social workers could be spread out more effectively if more group counselling was undertaken. Special interest groups such as one-parent families and people with budgeting problems could be dealt with in groups of 10 or 12 rather than a one-to-one casework format. Most participants felt that groups should be led by people who have special training and that if caseworkers were to be involved in a group format they would need some retraining. They also felt that group counselling should take place on a bi-monthly basis to be effective. This implies that the majority felt a continuing type of group counselling was preferable.

7. **Provide More Information Concerning the Rights and Privileges of the Recipients**

It would seem a valuable way of cutting down on overworked social workers' duties and, at the same time, increasing the prestige and esteem of the recipient, to have available in all offices well written, simple and accurate descriptions of their rights and privileges under the welfare system. It would also lead to uniformity of quality of service since the recipients would know what they can or cannot expect and would not be at the mercy of social workers who, through malice or ignornace, might shortchange them in whatever assistance they receive. Along with this type of written information, an information centre could be set up, staffed with recipient volunteers, where people could receive information about their rights and privileges. This kind of centre could pass on to administration the most prevalent questions and, in so doing, feed back changes in community conditions and legislation for inclusion in a reprint of the brochure on rights and privileges.

8. **Improve Appeal Procedures**

Appeal procedures could be improved by guaranteeing a fair hearing for all persons wishing some form of redress. It is important that all recipients be apprised of the fact that such a procedure is possible. Finally, appeal procedures should be conducted at the local level so that the administrators and supervisors in the local offices are made aware of recipients' complaints and any general changes in procedures could be effected. This would guarantee the corrective nature of the negative feedback, and local officials would not react in a hostile or defensive way because of the reprimands of provincial bodies.

9. **Set Up Specific Regulations About Enquiries Into Personal Life of Recipients.**

It is undoubtedly necessary to make some enquiries into the personal life of the recipient, but the recipient should be protected from "unnecessary nosiness." It is also important that regulations

be reviewed at regular intervals to make
sure that Victorian attitudes, no longer
embraced by the majority of the community,
are not being impressed on the recipient.

10.   Recipients Should Choose Their Counsellors
       Wherever Possible

       This would allow the recipients to have a much
       less inferior attitude in dealing with the
       Welfare Department, just as more wealthy people
       would chose a therapist. It would also tend
       to give a powerful feedback to both social
       workers and administrators as to the capabil-
       ities of counsellors. A counsellor in great
       demand would be reassured and his supervisor
       would have tangible indication of his ability.
       On the other hand, counsellors who did not
       have "any business" would be eligible for
       special assistance in terms of improving their
       counselling skills, or perhaps they should be
       looking for another avenue for their professional
       activity.

11.   Importance of First Contact With the Welfare
       System

       Administrators and staff of welfare offices
       should be impressed with the importance of the
       first contact the recipient has with the
       welfare system, in shaping his attitude towards
       himself and in developing attitudes of aliena-
       tion. If the people who first greet the
       recipients are aware that their attitude could
       have an important impact on resolving the pro-
       blem of a person who has gathered up his courage
       to come and ask for help, there may be a major
       improvement in the effectiveness of the entire
       welfare process.

12.   Create A Less Officious Atmosphere in Welfare
       Office

       If a division between financial assistance and
       counselling is made, there should also be a
       change in the atmosphere of the counselling
       service so that physical surroundings would be
       more conducive to discussion. Also, the client
       could be treated more like a consumer of other

services -- that is, appointments would be
made and conscientiously kept by social
workers; people would not have to wait for
hours to see the worker. In addition, when
the interview is underway, telephone inter-
ruptions would be cut off so the worker could
give his full attention to the recipient.

13   Improve Communication Within the Department

There seems to be a need for better two-way
communication between social workers and ad-
ministrators. There also appears to be a
need for improving the quality of administration
by more clearly defining areas of responsibility
and by involving people at different levels in
the hierarchy in a more progressively delegated
manner.

This could best be accomplished through a coordin-
ated effort involving laboratory type experiences
similar to those in this experiment which would
improve the quality of communication through
engendering trust and frank feedback. Along with
this there should be a program of Management by
Objectives where the whole office sets forward
its objectives and the people in subordinate
activities define them in terms of their own
personal goals and the objectives laid out for
the Department. It would appear that a program of
this type embracing in-service training and organ-
izational development principles could be engen-
dered over a period of from six months to two
years. With such a plan for modernizing the
administrative structure, better communication
could result and a more efficient use of the
work force, with increases in morale, could be
expected. A brief description of such a project
is contained as a hypothesis for further study in
the next section.

14.   Great Community Education to Provide a Better
Understanding of the Welfare Recipient and the
Welfare System

It appears that public officials, and particular-
ly politicians, have been embarrassed by the fact

that they give welfare to needy people. By
taking a defensive stand toward the issues
of misuse of welfare, rather than by being
more aggressive and telling the public about
the importance of supporting families in
genuine need, the recipient has been coloured
black in most government public relations
efforts. This is not due to any consistent
program to besmudge the reputation of the re-
cipients; it is a reaction to the occasional
press release suggestion that someone is get-
ting something for nothing under welfare.
Programs such as those initiated by some news
papers to support summer camps for needy
children or Christmas baskets for families in
need, could be used effectively by welfare
programs to show the importance of investing
in and supporting wives and children, the
elderly and the handicapped. It would seem to
be an important aspect of the budget of any
Welfare Department to tell its story, thereby
smoothing the way for recipients to get assis-
tance when they need it and also to make the
adjustment back into the community after they
have overcome their difficulties. In some
respects this is like a venereal disease program;
unless people come quickly and get early treat-
ment, and unless the advent of needing treatment
is seen as a medical need rather than a moral
weakness, programs to prevent venereal disease
can be seriously handicapped despite excellent
medication and clinical facilities.

HYPOTHESES FOR FUTURE STUDY

HYPOTHESES FOR FUTURE STUDY

Because this is an a exploratory study into the area
of factors causing alienation, leads from the present
investigation could be explored in a further study
within the context of action research.

1.   Separation of "Money-Giving" and "Counselling" Functions

We would suggest a project where the provision of
financial assistance to recipients would be
separated from the counselling. For a pilot study,
one office could provide a money-giving function
on an income supplement scale basis so that there
would not be the artificial distinction between
"being on" and "being off" welfare. As the reci-
pients earned more, the amount of assistance would
become less - very much like a reverse income tax.
The recipient would be encouraged to fill out his
own form and would have clerical assistance only in
completing that form. These forms could be adjudi-
cated either by a computer or by a clerk following
fairly simple rules. Such rules would be clearly
posted for the recipients, either in brochures or
advertisements. Normal auditing and control procedures
would be set in place to prevent people obtaining funds
under fraudulent conditions.

Quite apart from the money-giving function there would
be a counselling service where social workers would use
both group and individual counselling to satisfy the
requests of clients. Clients would make appointments
with workers, very much as with a mental health clinic
or private therapist. The major objective here would
be to help the client adjust to the problems facing
him and achieve some solution to his personal problems
which would help him to better satisfy his life goals
and presumably, eventually overcome his need for

welfare assistance. The counselling would be done in
confidence and the information obtained by the social
worker would not be used to adjudicate the recipient's
request for funds.

It would be important to explore such a program for
one year to assess the costs, the effectiveness of
the program and the reactions of the personnel as
well as the recipients. We would predict that there
would be much more remedial work done and that the
alienating forces at work in the present welfare
system would be reduced. To accomplish this a control
office which would conduct their program as usual,
would be needed and a careful follow-up required. On
the other hand, it would be important to find out whether
social workers feel that by having their money-giving
function taken away, they are handicapped in dealing with
their welfare recipients from a rehabilitative standpoint.
This experiment would also develop an excellent opportunity
to see what the perceived needs of the recipient are for
counselling and assistance of a psychological or case-
work nature.

2.   Coordination of Services

In a community of from 10 to 20 thousand in Canada,
it would be helpful for an action research program
to be mounted which would coordinate health, education
and welfare services, within a single community. Here
the efforts would not only be to have people from these
three important areas work together in planning and
providing the delivery of services, but also to include
members of the community who are in receipt of this
kind of service. This would not only be the recipients
of welfare but also people in the community who have
children in the educational system and people in the
community using health services. With the consumer
groups represented as well as the professionals who
deliver the services, it would be possible to try to
coordinate with other kinds of programs, such as
Manpower, providing for employment.

There also should be a conscious effort to try to
break down the inter-agency communication blocks by
utilization of common information pools and by

utilization of the human potential within the community which is normally not tapped. For example, people on welfare may be used to assist in community nursery-school programs or in visiting elderly people. Housewives and mothers could assist in educational programs or health programs. The objective here would be to assess the cost and the effectiveness of coordinating the many human resources in a community to satisfy in a well-coordinated and a carefully planned way the broad needs for social, medical and educational services.

A study of this type conducted for one or two years would provide valuable data, not only on the success of such a coordinated effort, but also on the major stumbling-blocks that would prevent achievement of these objectives.

3.   Organizational Development Program for a Regional Welfare Office

It is hypothesized that an organizational development facilitator, working one-third time over a period of two years with all members of a regional social welfare office (which would include not only the administrators, workers and clerical staff but also the recipient group), could improve the efficiency and reduce alienation caused by the operation of that office. One person working with groups from the office would move through the traditional organizational development program with the office as a whole, rather than selecting members from different offices to work with.

> a.   The first step would be to identify the objectives of the office. This would be undertaken by representatives from all groups and a document developed explaining what the office was supposed to do.
>
> b.   The second step would be to develop methods for measuring the movement toward that objective. Here again, it would be essential to work with groups in the office to review the procedures and information system so that a

program could be set up for
recording and evaluating various
group members' attainments of the
goals within the overall objectives
of the office.

c.   Next, it would be the responsibility
of the facilitator to help the group
develop an action plan so that they
could understand their own responsi-
bilities as individuals and the
responsibilities of other groups to
provide a coordinated effort toward
achieving these objectives.   This
would require the development of a
new atmosphere in the office and
new procedures based on such concepts
as Management by Objectives.

d.   Finally, a program for reviewing
progress with individuals and with
groups would have to be set up.
This would require further development
of the information system and provision
for decision-making at various
levels to alter activities so that
they could more efficiently achieve
the objectives.   After a complete
cycle, the objectives would have
to be reviewed and a new set of ob-
jectives set, with new goals for sub-
groups within the office and new sets
of personal objectives for those
people involved.

Such a program could be innovative in that the
recipients could be involved as well as the
administrators, social workers and clerical
staff.   With all groups working together to
set the objectives, measure their achievement
and review the progress being made, there seems
an excellent opportunity for evolving new methods
of delivery of welfare services and, at the same
time, understanding how better administrative
policies could be put into practice on a province
wide basis.

4. Use of Specific Laboratory Techniques in Welfare Offices

It was noted in the FINDINGS chapter of this report that Strength Bombardment and Career Planning Exercises conducted during our four-day sessions were very much appreciated by clients and social workers. It would appear that these and other training lab techniques could be used in a routine manner in dealing with clients and developing welfare office staff. We recommend that a program be developed, using procedures which are part of Sensivity Training and Laboratory Techniques, to innovate a more traditional case-work approach to counselling and providing welfare services. These techniques should be introduced within a controlled design so they can be evaluated against procedures now being used. It could then be assessed whether or not there was a reduction in alienation and more active, productive planning methods for the rehabilitation of recipients.

5. Improvement of Present Laboratory Program for Use in Staff Development on a Provincial Basis

Because of the extremely positive reaction to the program presented in Vancouver, we suggest that the most favourably received aspects should be developed and "packaged" by the Federal Government for use in staff development at the provincial level. The delivery of welfare services could be enhanced by providing staff training and developing tools for trainers wishing to improve the sensitivity and skill of their services.

In addition to this type of program development, workshops should be sponsored by the Federal Government for trainers who would use these tools. This would include not only welfare workers but case aids drawn from recipient groups, and people from the ranks of welfare offices (such as stenographers and clerks) who have excellent human skills. There is a great pool of untapped human resources in British Columbia (and no doubt in other provinces) which could be utilized at all levels to improve and humanize the delivery of welfare services. The Federal Government could provide an important addition to the provision of welfare by training leaders and developing tools, thereby reducing alienating forces which have been at work and are demonstrated in this study.

75

APPENDIX

IMPORTANT ISSUES (PROBLEMS)
FACING THE WELFARE SYSTEM

1. The need for an adequate number of staff with
    sensitivity for people.

2. Interpret the delivery of services to the community-
    most people have skills they want to use rather
    than get welfare.

3. Improve the image of the welfare recipient (not
    free loader, second class lazy bums).

4. Get as much stability for children in a foster
    home as possible.

5. Develop resources in the community.

6. Eliminate overlapping of services.

7. Case loads are too large especially with all the
    paper work.

8. Lack of personal interest of social worker for
    client - just another number.

9. Use of staff - when to use trained staff, aids
    and recipients.

10. Refined way of consulting field staff when policy
    decisions are to be made - gives meaning to field
    staff.

11. How to assess the proper type and size of case load.

12. Implement services on an expedient rather than
    a personal basis.

13. More decentralization of decisions, but within a
    structure.

14. Rehabilitation resources lack coordination.

15. Decision-making - who makes it - how quickly it should be decentralized.

16. New concepts of services are implemented before all the implications are worked out.

17. Lack of information about services available - pamphlets

18. There is an age barrier to getting jobs or job training for older people.

19. Impossible to move foster children from one district to another.

20. More free recreation services for children who cannot afford them.

21. Recipients should be given a list of services they could be paid to perform to make them feel less useless.

22. Administrative red tape - too much time spent in straightening up messes - lack of good administration.

23. Receiving welfare creates guilt, humility and shame.

.24. Decentralization of provincial decision-making.

25. Social workers function as clerks.

26. Pay full cost of rehabilitation and re-education.

27. Social workers and clients do not know what services are available.

28. Social workers are not kept up to date on new methods of giving service.

29. Instructions from departments are not clear. Any number of interpretations can be taken.

30. Need for staff development.

31. How do we know what a community needs?

32. Social workers are not active enough in terms of helping their clients.

33. Some recipients receive payments for education where others do not.

34. An experienced client should be made available to clients applying for the first time.

35. More services should be given to crises occurring after 5:00 p.m. seven days a week.

36. Social workers tend to pass the buck.

37. Social workers are victims of rumour - they are in the middle, between the administration and the public.

38. Social workers, like all professionals, go over-board for one approach to the exclusion of all others.

39. Is the function of the social worker just to give money?

40. Children in school where they can turn for services in the community.